

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

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O R 071141Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1743

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

USINT DAMASCUS

USMISSION GENEVA

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 1330

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IS

SUBJ: MRS MEIR PRESENTS NEW CABINET TO PRESIDENT KATZIR

GENEVA FOR MEPC DEL

USEUCOM FOR POLAND

REF: TEL AVIV 1317

1. AS WIRE SERVICES HAVE ALREADY WIDELY REPORTED, MRS MEIR INFORMED
PRESIDENT KATZIR MARCH 6 THAT SHE HOPED TO PRESENT TO KNESSET
MARCH 10 NEW COALITION GOVERNMENT INCLUDING NATIONAL RELIGIOUS
PARTY (NRP) WHICH HAD JUST INFORMED HER OF ITS AGREEMENT IN
PRINCIPLE TO ENTER COALITION. PROTRACTED CRISIS THUS IS WINDING
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DOWN WITH LIKELY RECONSTRUCTION OF OUTGOING TRIPARTITE COALITION

(LABOR ALIGNMENT-INDEPENDENT LIBERALS-NRP) COMMANDING 68-SEAT MAJORITY. PRESIDENT KATZIR FORMALLY EXTENDED DEADLINE FOR COMPLETION OF NEW GOVERNMENT UNTIL MARCH 10 AND, BARRING YET ANOTHER UNFORESEEABLE DEVELOPMENT, ISRAEL'S NEW GOVERNMENT WILL BE INSTALLED IN OFFICE ON THAT DATE.

2. NATIONAL RELIGIOUS PARTY EXECUTIVE AND KNESSET FACTION MARCH 6 VOTED (30-17-4) TO JOIN COALITION. THOSE WHO FAVORED MOVE PUT EMPHASIS ON IMPORTANCE OF RESOLVING DOMESTIC CRISIS IMMEDIATELY GIVEN CONTINUING TENSE SECURITY SITUATION ON SYRIAN BORDER WHEREAS THOSE WHO WERE AGAINST THE DECISION SAID THAT NRP SHOULD NOT GIVE UP ITS BASIC PRINCIPLES OR JOIN COALITION WITHOUT PRIOR CONSULTATION WITH RABBINATE. YOUTH FACTION REITERATED ITS PREFERENCE FOR NATIONAL UNITY GOVERNMENT INCLUDING LIKUD. TODAY'S CENTRAL COMMITTEE VOTE IS EXPECTED TO FOLLOW PATTERN OF VOTE NOTED ABOVE, ENABLING NRP TO ENTER GOVERNMENT. OPEN QUESTION IS WHETHER SUCH DECISION WILL LEAD TO PARTY SPLIT, EITHER NOW OR SOMEWHAT LATER ON.

3. NEW CABINET, ASSUMING NRP ISCLUSION, WILL INCLUDE 23 MINISTERS COMPARED TO 19 IN OUTGOING CABINET. NEW MINISTERS WHOSE APPOINTMENTS ARE DEFINITE AT THIS TIME ARE: ZADOK-JUSTICE, RABIN-LABOR, RABINOWITZ-HOUSING, AHARON UZAN-COMMUNICATIONS (ALL FROM MAPAI SECTION OF LABOR PARTY), SHIOMO ROSEN-ABSORPTION (MAPAM), AND GIDEON HAUSNER-WITHOUT PORTFOLIO (INDEPENDENT LIBERALS). MRS MEIR REPORTEDLY ASKED YARIV TO BE MINISTER OF TRANSPORT AND HE HAS REQUESTED A DAY TO THINK IT OVER.

4. NRP WILL BE GIVEN FOUR MINISTRIES ONCE ITS PARTICIPATION IS FINALIZED, NEW NRP MINISTER WILL BE YITZHAK RAPHAEL WHO REPORTEDLY WILL BE MINISTER OF RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS, WHILE INCUMBENT ZERAH WARHAFIG MAY BECOME MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO.

5. AMONG ONGOING MINISTERS, ALLON, DAYAN, EBAN, SAPIR, BAR-LEV, GVATI, HILLEL, SHEMTOV, KOL, GALILI, BURG AND HAZANI WILL KEEP THEIR PRESENT PORTFOLIOS. PERES WILL TAKE OVER NEW MINISTRY OF INFORMATION.

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6. INCREASE IN NUMBER OF MINISTRIES, DESPITE POLITICAL AND MEDIA CALLS FOR THEIR REDUCTION, IS ITSELF REFLECTION OF PRESSURES UNDER WHICH MRS MEIR LABORED TO FORM NEW COALITION. BOTH COALITION PARTNERS HAVE INCREASED THEIR MINISTERIAL REPRESENTATION BY ONE. MOREOVER TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS MINISTRY HAS BEEN BROKEN UP AND ONE NEW MINISTRY, INFORMATION, HAS BEEN CREATED.

7. COMMENT: EIGHT NEW CABINET MEMBERS (ASSUMING YARIV AND RAPHAEL JOIN) WILL GIVE GOI DOMINANTLY MODERATE OR DOVISH MAKEUP. WE WOULD EXPECT GENERALLY CONSTRUCTIVE AND POSITIVE APPROACH TO UPCOMING NEGOTIATIONS, WITH RABIN, YARIV AND RABINOWITZ LIKELY TO JOIN INNER CIRCLE OF DECISION-MAKERS.
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